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IN THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE#5A  
HB  
8/13/01

International Application No. : PCT/EP99/07088  
International Filing Date : 16 SEPTEMBER 1999  
Priority Date(s) Claimed : 18 SEPTEMBER 1998  
Applicant(s) (DO/EO/US) : MIWA, Naoto, et al.  
Title: NEAR INFRARED FLUORESCENT CONTRAST AGENT AND  
FLUORESCENCE IMAGING

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

SIR:

Prior to calculating the national fee, and prior to examination in the National Phase of the above-identified International application, please amend as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

3. (Amended) The near infrared fluorescent contrast agent of claim 1, wherein, in the formula [I], r is 1.

4. (Amended) The near infrared fluorescent contrast agent of claim 1, wherein 4 or more sulfonic acid groups are contained in a molecule.

5. (Amended) The near infrared fluorescent contrast agent of claim 1, wherein 10 or less sulfonic acid groups are contained in a molecule.

6. (Amended) The near infrared fluorescent contrast agent of claim 1, wherein 8 or less sulfonic acid groups are contained in a molecule.

7. (Amended) The near infrared fluorescent contrast agent of claim 1, wherein the pharmaceutically acceptable salt is a sodium salt.

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